

News for Immediate Release
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California Resources Secretary Announces Funding
for Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Project

SACRAMENTO - California Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman today announced that the Salton Sea Authority will receive \$750,000 for a pilot treatment project for selenium removal. The project is part of the Resources Agency's Salton Sea ecosystem restoration study.

"The state is strongly committed to restoring the Salton Sea ecosystem and the permanent protection of the fish and wildlife dependent on that ecosystem," said Chrisman. "Today's action to provide additional financial support for the Salton Sea Authority's selenium removal pilot testing is another important step to preserve this valuable resource for future generations."

The announcement was made during a meeting of the Resources Secretary's Salton Sea Advisory Committee. The Committee provides assistance and consultation to the Resources Agency, which is required by state law to prepare the Salton Sea ecosystem restoration plan by the end of 2006.

The Salton Sea is an inland saline lake in southeastern California. The state's largest lake, it spans across Riverside and Imperial counties. It is a terminal lake, meaning it has no outlets.

"We are pleased to receive this funding and cooperate with the Resources Agency on this project," said Ron Enzweiler, executive director of the Salton Sea Authority. "The selenium management plan will be a key component of any successful restoration project."

Secretary Chrisman also announced that the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the Salton Sea Authority are discussing a project that could fund a comprehensive wetlands planning and development effort to improve water quality within the Salton Sea watershed.

This project would be developed in coordination with the Citizens' Congressional Task Force on the New River. The Task Force was formed in 1997 to improve river quality and wildlife habitat. Working with the Imperial Irrigation District, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California's Department of Fish and Game, and other agencies, the Task Force has constructed two test wetlands. The Task Force has also identified additional sites where

wetlands projects could be constructed.

Originating about 15 miles south of Mexicali, Mexico, the New River crosses the International Boundary at Calexico, California, and travels about 60 miles through Imperial County before discharging its entire flow into the Salton Sea. It is recognized as a significant pollution problem because it carries urban runoff, untreated and partially treated municipal wastes, untreated and partially treated industrial wastes, agricultural runoff and fecal coliform bacteria. Much of the New River's channel is bordered by non-native plant species such as tamarisk, and supports only limited wildlife habitat.

For more information go to: <http://www.salttonsea.water.ca.gov/>

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